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THE LAW AND CUSTOM OF THE CONSTITUTION. By Sir William R. Anson. In three volumes. Vol. I: Parliament. Fourth Edition. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press; London, New York, and Toronto: Henry Frowde. 1909. pp. xxvi, 404.

How far change and growth are characteristic of the constitutional machinery of England is again brought to mind by the new edition of "Parliament" in Sir William Anson's standard volumes on the "Law and Custom of the Constitution." The first edition of this particular volume, which was published in 1886, was contained in 336 pages. The new edition extends to 404 pages; and to students who are familiar with Sir William Anson's clearness and brevity of expression, and also with the detail which makes his treatise so continuously serviceable, it need not be stated that there is not a paragraph in the new edition of the volume on "Parliament" that could be deleted without obvious loss. If the treatise were to maintain its classic place the additional fifty or sixty pages were necessary, and for two reasons. Between 1886 and 1909 there were large and rich accumulations of new material helpful to an understanding of the working of the English Parliamentary system; and in that period also there were significant developments in political conditions — in the House of Commons as well as in the constituencies — of which adequate note must be taken in a treatise like that which has now so long been associated with the name of Sir William Anson.

The actual working of the present day English constitution can be studied at first hand in the main from only two sources, — the reports of the debates in the two Houses of Parliament, and the memoirs and correspondence of men who have been long and actively concerned in the working of the constitution. It is new material of the latter class that has accumulated so largely and so richly since the first edition of Sir William Anson's book was published twenty-four years ago. Queen Victoria's Letters of 1837-1861 and Morley's Life of Gladstone have both been published within this period; and these volumes alone carry more material helpful to an understanding of the cabinet and the parliamentary systems than all the memoirs that were in print at the time Sir William Anson wrote the first of the three books of his treatise. Whilst this first-hand material was thus accumulating between 1886 and 1909 great changes were in making in the political condition of England. Following the extension of the Parliamentary franchise in 1880-85 a new democracy came into being — a democracy which since then has expressed itself (1) in the increasing strength of the Irish Nationalist party; (2) by the incoming of the Labor party in the constituencies of England and in the House of Commons; and (3) by the gradual disappearance of men of the landed governing classes from cabinets which are maintained in power by Liberal majorities in the House of Commons.

Arising out of these developments English political life since 1886 has been more continuously active than at any other period in modern British history. Government has been brought nearer than ever to the people. The permanent functions of nearly all the great departments of state at Whitehall have been greatly extended; and more important perhaps than all from the standpoint of the student of the working of the constitution, pressure on Parliament arising out of this new political activity has since 1886 made necessary drastic changes in the procedure of the House of Commons. Within these twenty-four years there were greater and more far-reaching changes in procedure than were made between the beginning of the Journals in the reign of Edward VI and the reform of the House of Commons in 1832. Arising also out of these later changes in the procedure of the House of Commons and out of the developments since 1886 in the constituencies, the House of Lords to-day stands in a new attitude towards the House of Commons; so much so that reform in the constitution of the House of Lords is now demanded by both political parties; although there is and can be no agreement between the Tory and the Liberal parties as to the nature of the remodeling.

The new material of direct value to an understanding of the working of the constitution that accumulated between 1886 and 1909 has been carefully winnowed by Sir William Anson and embodied with much skill in the revised edition of his treatise; and of the changes in the working of the constitution since 1886 there is adequate and illuminating notice. Sir William Anson is generous in his acknowledgments to students working in the same field; and particularly so to authors of monographs on different sections of British constitutional machinery who are not of his countrymen. Three such books are specially acknowledged in the preface, — two from New England and one from Vienna. One of these tributes is paid to President Lowell's "admirable treatise on the Government of England, and in particular to his account of party organization in Parliamentary and municipal life."

E. P.

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- INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS' AND EMPLOYERS' LIABILITY. By Theophilus J. Moll. Cincinnati: The W. H. Anderson Company. 1910. pp. lvi, 378.
- A TREATISE ON THE FEDERAL CORPORATION TAX LAW OF 1909. By Arthur W. Machen, Jr. Boston: Little, Brown and Company. 1910. pp. xxv, 269.
- THE PRINCIPLES OF ARGUMENT. By Edwin Bell. Toronto: Canada Law Book Company, Limited; Philadelphia: Cromarty Law Book Company. 1910. pp. xiv, 339.
- COMPANY LAW. By William F. Hamilton. Third Edition. London: Butterworth and Company. 1910. pp. cxx, 557, 110.
- WILLIS AND OLIVER'S ROMAN LAW EXAMINATION GUIDE. Third Edition. By David T. Oliver and W. Walder Williams. London: Butterworth and Company. 1910. pp. x, 392, 21.